COUNTRY LIFE

PICTURE BOOK OF THE CORONATION

2nd JUNE 1953

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THE CORONATION

ON THE BALCONY OF BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh acknowledge the cheers of the crowds on their return to the Palace after their drive through London. Between them are their children, Prince Charles the Duke of Cornwall and Princess Anne. To their left stands Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother, and on their right one of the Queen's Maids of Honour.

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CORONATION DAY

by Raymond Birt

WE shall all of us treasure our vivid personal memories of Coronation Day in 1953. And one thing is certain about them, that never before have they had so much in common, or been so intimately joined in common remembrance. Something of the splendour and the solemnity of other Coronations has spread out from London through the written word, through photographs, through films, or through the attentive microphones that have scattered about the world the shrilling triumph of the acclamation of trumpets in Westminster Abbey. But no other Coronation has had so great a host of witnesses. How many people saw the ceremonies in Westminster Abbey no-one will ever know: possibly twenty million or more, through the eyes of the television cameras, were granted a place at the service. What had been hitherto the privilege of the few was now made visible to almost the whole nation. In those supreme moments of anointing, coronation, and the Queen's dedication to her life of service, the nation was united in a unique act of witness and, most surely, of profound renewal of ancient loyalties to the Crown and to the things of which it is so glorious a symbol.

It was fitting, in this year of 1953, that television was able to work its magic. We owe it to the devotion and character of four sovereigns, Victoria, Edward VII, George V and George VI, that the Crown has never been so popular or cherished an institution as it is today. It embodies the best of our ideals, the truest of our beliefs and the most tenacious of our purposes. It is the visible expression of our national solidarity, and of the union of the great Commonwealth of peoples of which we are a part. This, above all, in the person of a beloved and radiant young Queen, was the time in which to be able to unite in affirmation of loyalty both to the institution and the Sovereign herself.

It is true that the world in which we live is dangerous, perplexing, and insecure. Whatever else faces the new Elizabethans, ease and comfort are not likely to be among them. Inevitably, therefore, one or two cantankerous voices were heard at the time of the Coronation grumbling that the whole nation had indulged in fury of escape into make-believe from the intolerable present. Nothing could be farther from the truth. What the Coronation gave was a pause for an accounting of our condition. It was a time of reconciliation, of the expression of the nation's solidarity; a time for steadying ourselves for an uncertain and challenging future, and for re-affirming the purposes for which, as a nation, we live or we die. In the shaping of this assessment, the presence of millions 'in the Abbey' at the moving ceremonies of the Coronation rite was the most important influence. This was the true significance of television's triumph in 1953.

The triumph was underlined by news from the other side of the world on Coronation Day. Everest had at last been conquered. The expedition of 1953, under the leadership of Colonel John Hunt, had succeeded in the last dramatic feat of world exploration open to man. The New Zealander Edmund Hillary and the Sherpa Tensing had wrested from that terrible mountain the most glittering of trophies to lay at the feet of a Queen about to go to her crowning. It was not only the timing of the feat that was so appropriate. As fitting was its symbolism at the opening of this new reign: great hazards and the strictest trials of human courage and endurance magnificently overcome. It was the best of omens on this triumphal day.

And with what gaiety the whole country rose to this great occasion! In one great heave of the shoulders, austerity (that grim and inescapable shadow of the past fifteen years) was shrugged off. Everywhere the flags came out, and the flowers, and the garlands, the ribbons, the rosettes, the streamers and the bunting. The flames leapt from thousands of bonfires and the night sky glittered with the transitory constellations of rockets. It was magnificently a day for celebration, community by community, throughout all the countries owing their allegiance to the Queen. And even in countries to which monarchy is theoretically abhorrent, and where English is not spoken, the Coronation made its mark. Loyal Englishmen in particular must have felt that it was in the natural order of things that the Prime Minister designate of France was compelled to postpone his presentation of policy before the Assembly because nothing could be done 'until after the Coronation'.

London, of course, was this day the focal point, the magnet, the cynosure and the nonpareil. And it must be fondly recorded that London excelled itself, and in typical London fashion. It is not a city which lends itself easily to the pomp of display. It has only one notable processional way (the Mall), and its streets and buildings are, on the whole, resolutely individualistic in character. So, on the whole, were the decorations. On parts of the route, and above all in the red-and-white magnificence of the City of London's streets, one deciding hand had imposed unity upon the displays. Elsewhere it was as the fancy of boards of directors liked it: an expression of diversity in unity, and a splendid opportunity granted to every sightseer to be his own (and his neighbour's) critic.

But beyond question the streets through which the Queen drove in her golden coach were a glory of colour and joyous salutation—in spite of grey skies and the heavy, cold rain of what too often passes for a summer's day in England. From Buckingham Palace first into the Mall, with its four great blue-and-gold quadruple arches surmounted with rampant lions and unicorns, and decorated with coronets and gold and silver balls: a royal spectacle composed of rich crimson banners, golden crowns and trumpets, and the green, the vivid young green, of plane trees new-leaved in June. Through the nautical blue and gold of Admiralty Arch, into the banner-waving spaces of Trafalgar Square, and, by way of Northumberland Avenue,

along the Victoria Embankment, whose somewhat sparing decorations were redeemed by the flags and clamour of thousands of London's schoolchildren. And so into Parliament Square, its cool, open space quite gone under the massively elegant stands whose pennants stood stiff to a seemingly implacable wind, and to the Abbey itself, almost wholly lost behind the white and gold of stands and the temporary buildings required by so elaborate a ceremonial.

So to the crowning, and after it the acclamation of the new-crowned Queen as the great procession marched and pranced and played its way through the heart of London. Each street, each section of the route, announced a different theme that also managed to suggest something of the character of the roads by which it passed. Whitehall, brilliant with flowers and stately with standards helmeted and plumed in red and silver: Pall Mall, home of many famous London clubs, its stands and façades richly ablaze with draperies and hangings that looked like a setting for the passage of knights in armour: Piccadilly, rejoicing in the green of plane trees, its lamps garlanded with flowers and cunningly contrived cages of wicker-work: Hyde Park, guarded by a stately procession of giant pikes bearing the insignia of the forces of the Commonwealth: Oxford Street, a gorgeous fairground of multi-coloured store-fronts, its pavements lined with a parade of standards bright with gold and red, and its lamps of shining blue delicately abloom with red roses: Regent Street, obedient to a master-design of huge pink roses, and pink roses again on the green fabric hangings—a scheme that possibly failed of its purpose because, as the Heralds themselves know, pageantry must declare itself only in the most forthright of colours. And then by way of Piccadilly Circus, with gleaming Eros temporarily enclosed in a gilded cage, through Trafalgar Square once more and down the Mall.

Through this wondrously radiant London rode a radiant Queen. Nothing during this tremendous day was more moving than the joy and dignity of her bearing. She was happy and she was glorious. In the pageantry that surrounded her was all the splendour of the British past, and in her youth and beauty was all the bright promise of the future. Yet what will most abide in the memory of millions is their participation, through television, in the Abbey service. Pageantry there must be at such a time as this, and dancing in the streets. Now we know that the fun is not only because a Sovereign is crowned, but also an expression of gladness that all are joined in the most solemn of dedications. The meaning and the mystery of the Queen's crowning have been brought into our homes. For the first time in our history a Sovereign has truly been dedicated to the service of the nation in the sight of all the people. The effects of this achievement are incalculable; but they can only be good. Through the young and royal lady, moving with such grace and greatness amid the pomp of these solemn rites, we have seen ourselves united, and we shall never forget it.

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50 The State Coach at Hyde Park Corner
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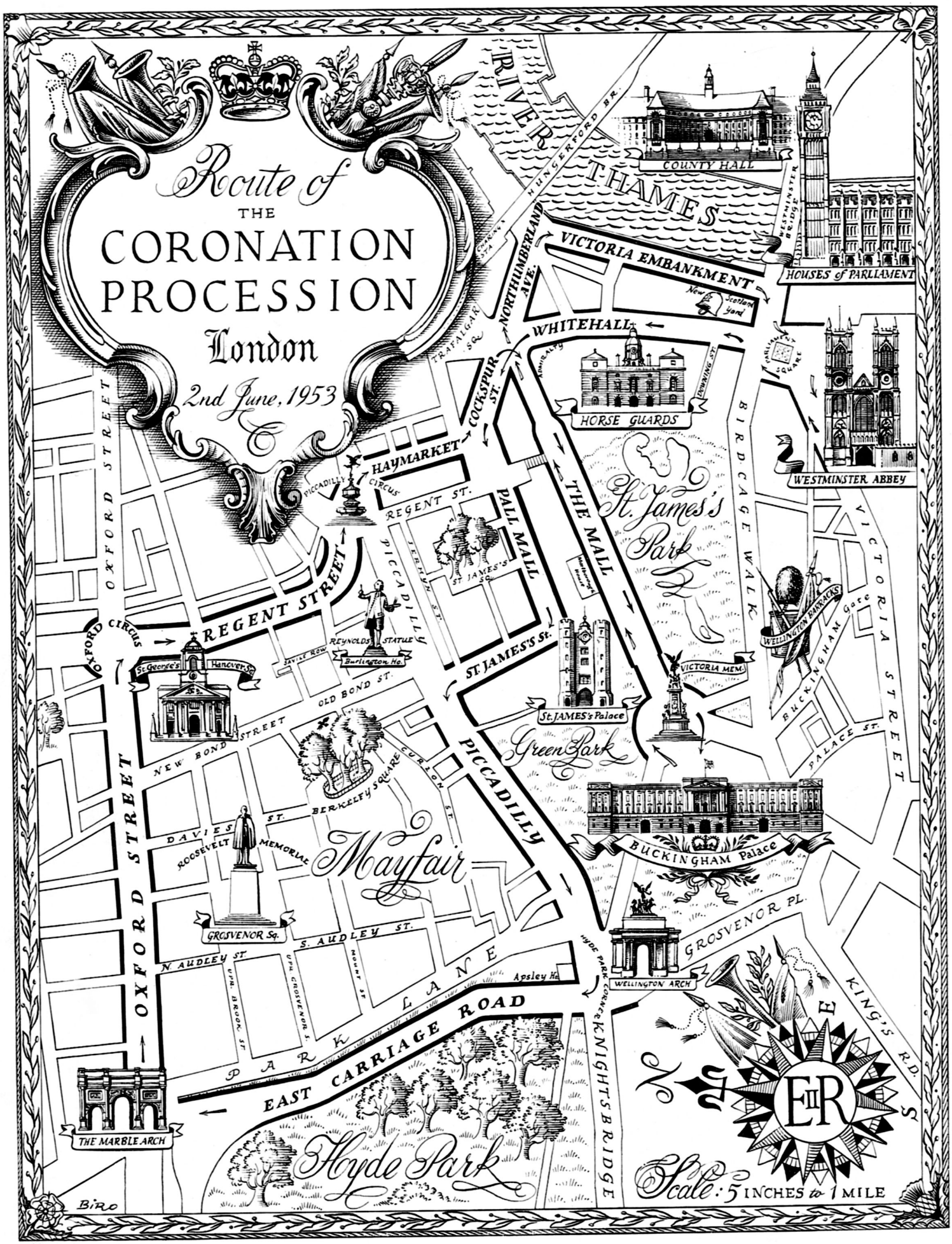
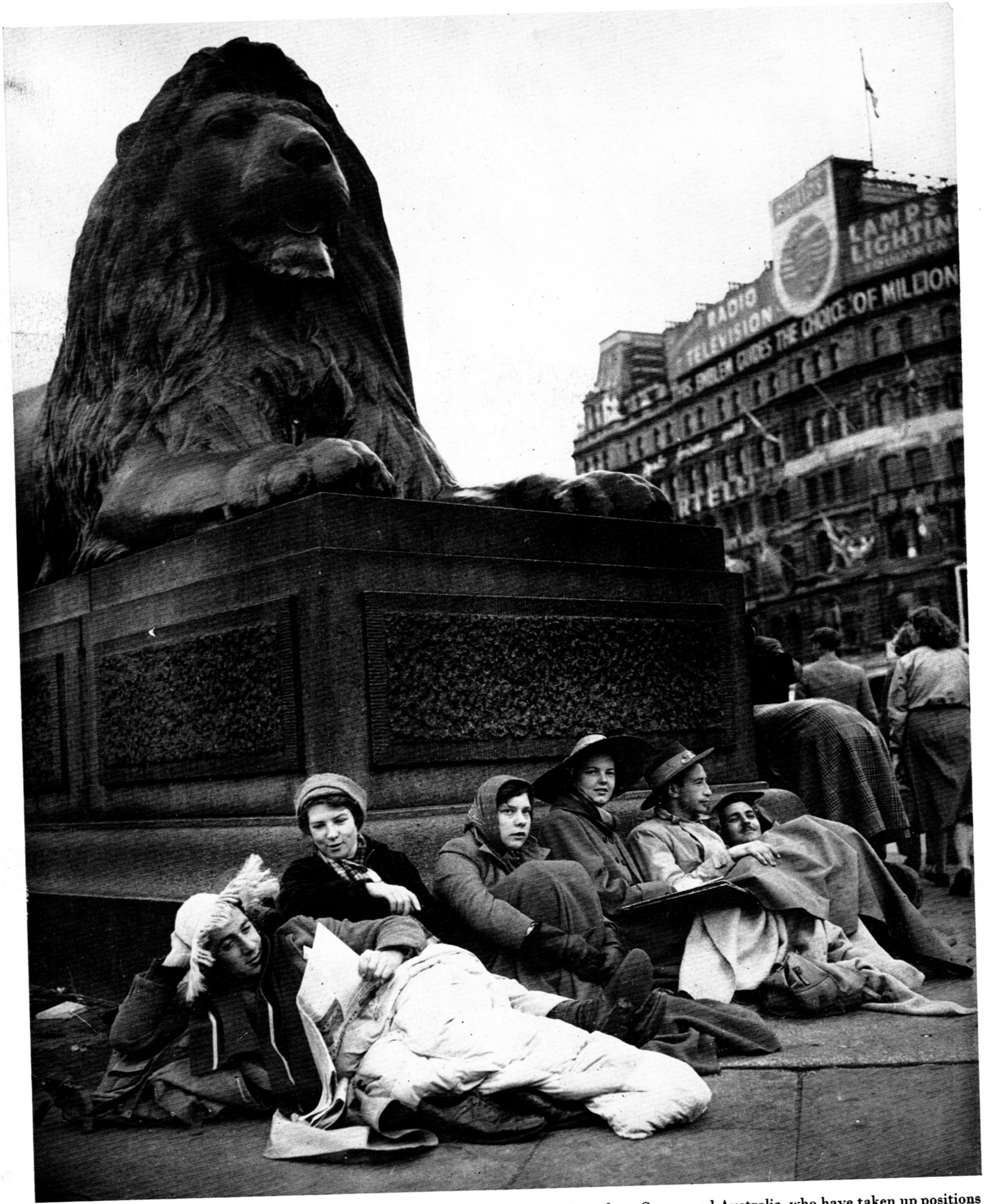
62 The Royal Family in Buckingham Palace
63 The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh in the Throne Room at Buckingham Palace


Route of
THE
CORONATION
PROCESSION
London
2nd June, 1953
RIVER THAMES
HUNGERFORD BR.
COUNTY HALL
WESTMINSTER BRIDGE
HOUSES of PARLIAMENT
VICTORIA EMBANKMENT
NORTHUMBERLAND AVE.
New Scotland Yard
WHITEHALL
TRAFALGAR SQ.
COCKSPUR ST.
HORSE GUARDS
PARLIAMENT SQUARE
WESTMINSTER ABBEY
BIRDCAGE WALK
HAYMARKET
PICCADILLY CIRCUS
REGENT ST.
PALL MALL
THE MALL
St. James's Park
OXFORD STREET
REGENT STREET
PICCADILLY
JERMYN ST.
ST. JAMES'S SQ.
REYNOLDS STATUE
Burlington Ho.
SAVILE ROW
OXFORD CIRCUS
St. George's
Hanover Sq.
OLD BOND ST.
ST. JAMES'S ST.
St. JAMES's Palace
VICTORIA MEM.
WELLINGTON BARRACKS
BUCKINGHAM Gate
VICTORIA STREET
PALACE ST.
Green Park
NEW BOND STREET
BERKELEY SQUARE
CURZON ST.
DAVIES ST.
ROOSEVELT MEMORIAL
Mayfair
BUCKINGHAM Palace
GROSVENOR Sq.
S. AUDLEY ST.
N. AUDLEY ST.
UPR. BROOK ST.
UPR. GROSVENOR S.
MOUNT ST.
Apsley Ho.
GROSVENOR PL.
KING'S RD.
WELLINGTON ARCH
HYDE PARK CORNER
KNIGHTSBRIDGE
PARK LANE
EAST CARRIAGE ROAD
THE MARBLE ARCH
Hyde Park
EIIR
Scale: 5 INCHES to 1 MILE
Biro

1. THE QUEEN SETS OUT. The radiant Queen, accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, greets the vast crowds around the Victoria Memorial as she leaves Buckingham Palace in the Royal State Coach on the way to her crowning in Westminster Abbey.



2. EARLY ARRIVALS. A wait of twenty-four hours lies ahead of these visitors from Greece and Australia, who have taken up positions at the feet of one of Landseer's lions in Trafalgar Square. From this place they will see the Queen three times.

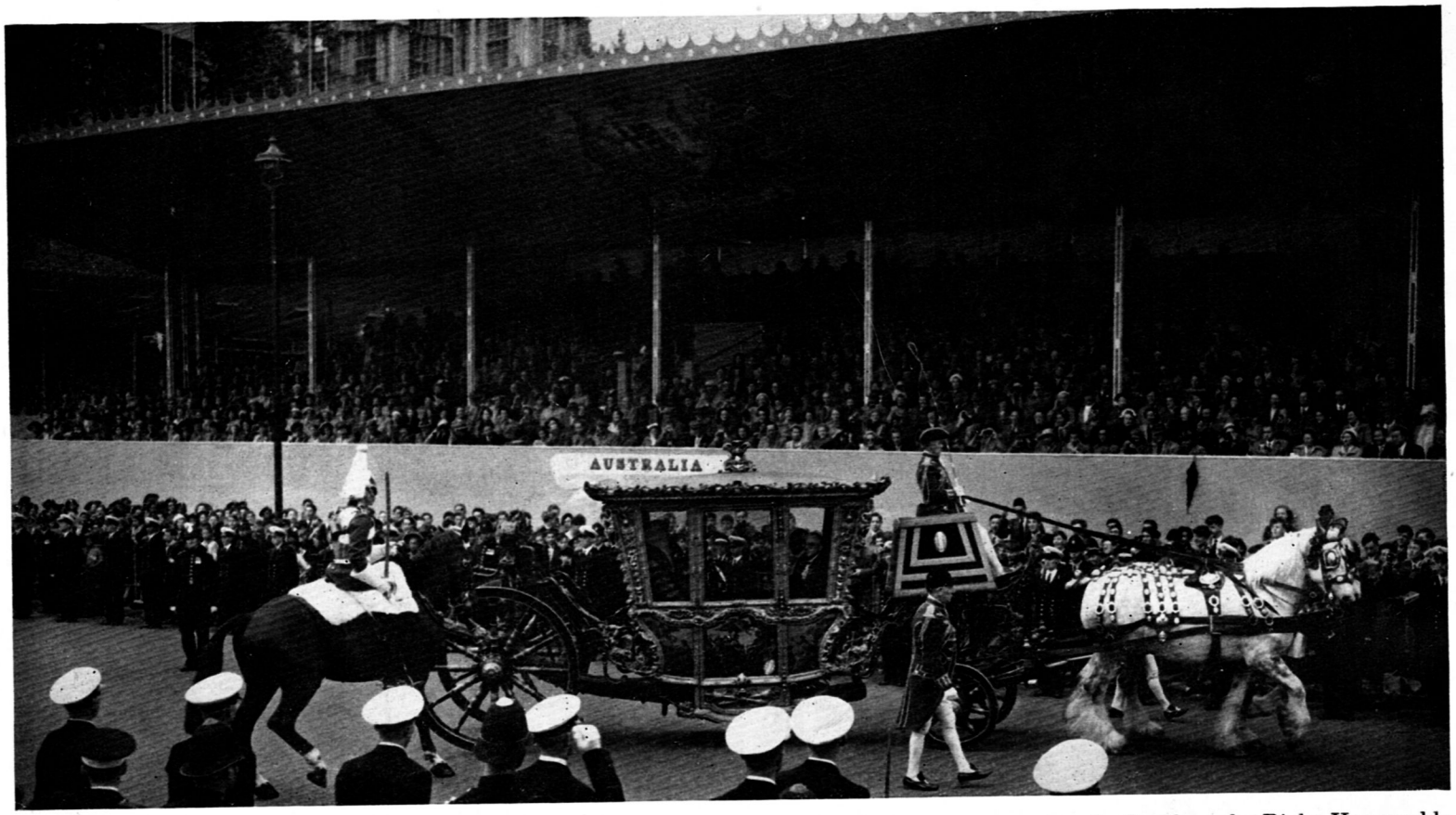
3. WAITING IN THE RAIN. As evening comes, the rain begins to fall. But in the Mall the ranks of those who will wait through the night begin to thicken. Behind them sightseers take their last chance of seeing the decorations before the great day.

4. ASLEEP IN THE MALL. Beneath the plane trees the rugs come out, and the sightseers make the best of their hard night's lying. Their reward will come when they see the Queen drive by before and after the Abbey service.

5. SIR WINSTON CHURCHILL, in the uniform of Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports, leaves 10 Downing Street for the Abbey.

6. PROCESSION OF THE LORD MAYOR. Early in the morning the famous coach of the Lord Mayor of London, attended by pikemen, drives from the city along Thames-side, carrying Sir Rupert de la Bère to play his part in the Coronation ceremonies.

7. THE REGALIA PROCESSION IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY. The Dean of Westminster bears St Edward's Crown—which the Archbishop of Canterbury will place upon the Queen's head at the moment of coronation—to the Abbey on the morning of Coronation Day.



8. THE SPEAKER'S COACH, drawn by two heavy greys, leaves the House of Commons carrying the Speaker, the Right Honourable W. S. Morrison, to his place in Westminster Abbey.

9. THE PERISCOPES ARE LIFTED in Trafalgar Square as the vast crowd sees the first processions to the Abbey pass by. In the right background is the garlanded façade of South Africa House.

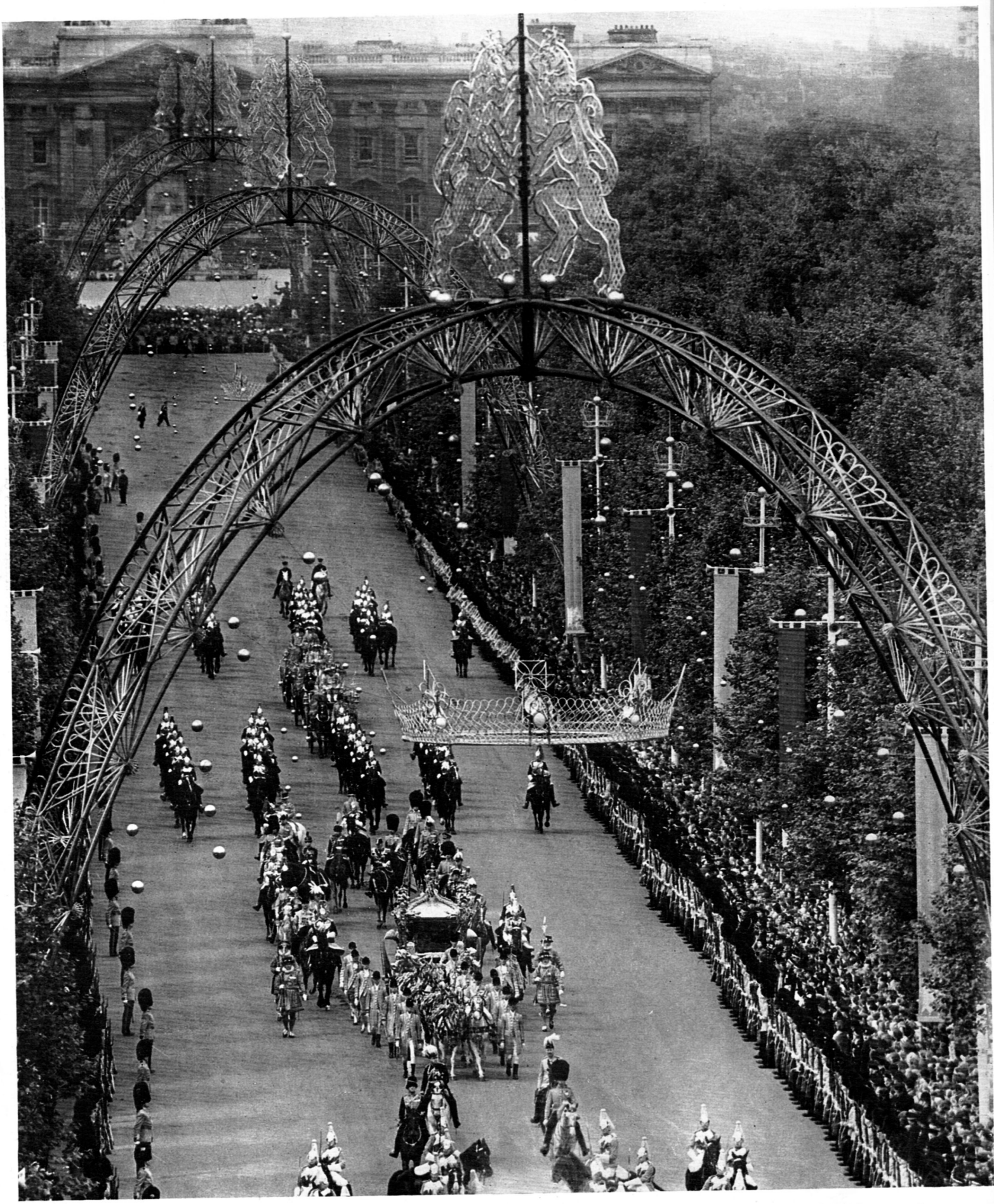
10. THE QUEEN MOTHER AND PRINCESS MARGARET, having left Clarence House by way of the Mall, greet the crowds in Northumberland Avenue as the Glass Coach nears the Abbey.

11. THE STATE COACH, attended by footmen and Yeomen of the Guard, makes a brilliant picture as it leaves behind it the gates of Buckingham Palace and takes the Queen on the first stage of her journey through the London crowds.

12. LEAVING THE PALACE. In her glittering Coronation dress, decorated with the emblems of the Commonwealth, the Queen moves towards the State Coach. She is attended by the Master of the Horse, the Duke of Beaufort.

13. BEFORE BUCKINGHAM PALACE. The Royal Standard flutters against the sky, sailors, guardsmen, and airmen present arms, and the crowd roars. Drawn by eight greys, in splendid harness, the Queen's coach begins its stately progress to the Abbey, followed by its Sovereign's escort of the Household Cavalry.

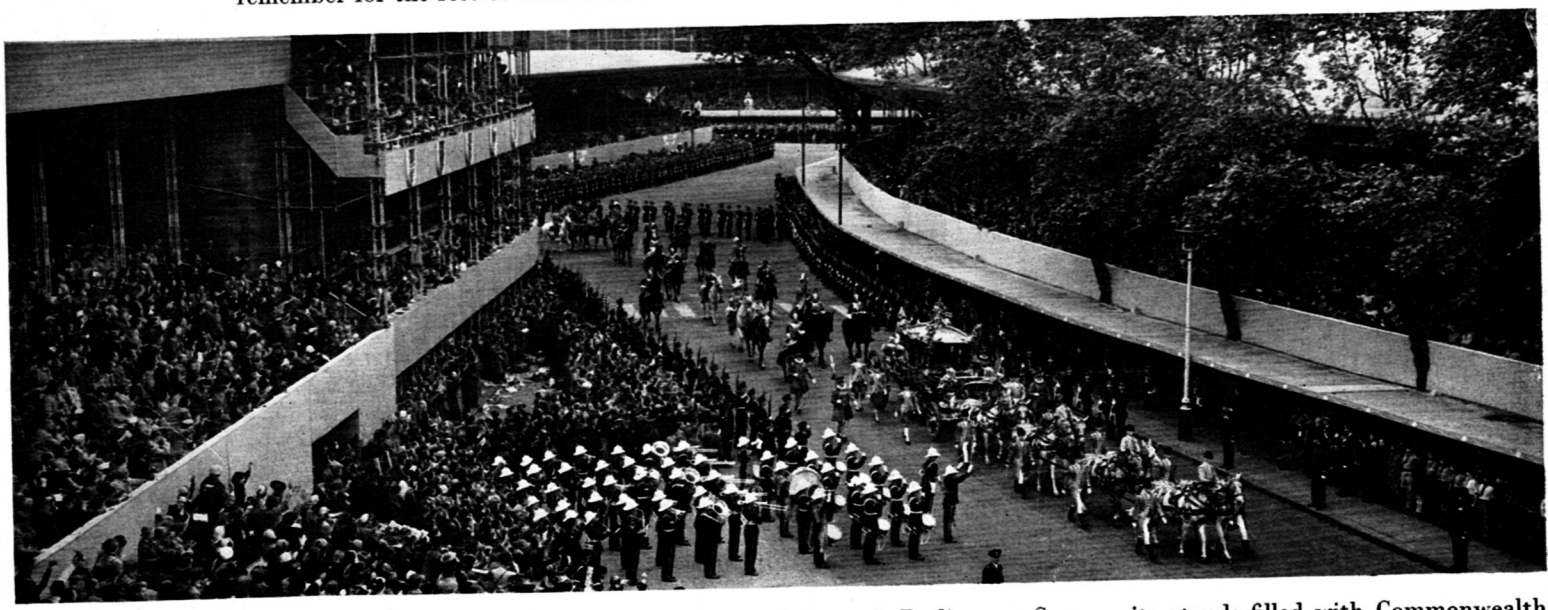
14. INTO THE MALL. The great processional way is ablaze with colour. Behind the crowd is the young green of the plane trees. From the golden trumpets at the head of the crowned poles hang banners in two shades of rich red. And along the route stand soldiers of the Brigade of Guards in their scarlet tunics.



15. THE ARCHES OF THE MALL. Beneath the blue-and-gold arches that span the Mall, the Queen's splendid procession passes. The magnificent triumphal arches—the most successful, perhaps, of all the Coronation decorations—are surmounted by the lion and the unicorn, and are decorated with coronets and a glitter of gold and silver balls.

16. THE ROYAL COACH IN TRAFALGAR SQUARE. Here the route is lined by men of the Royal Navy. Beyond them is Admiralty Arch, flying the White Ensign and decorated in blue and gold with looped cables, anchors and Admiralty crowns. In the right foreground is the statue of Charles I, facing Whitehall.

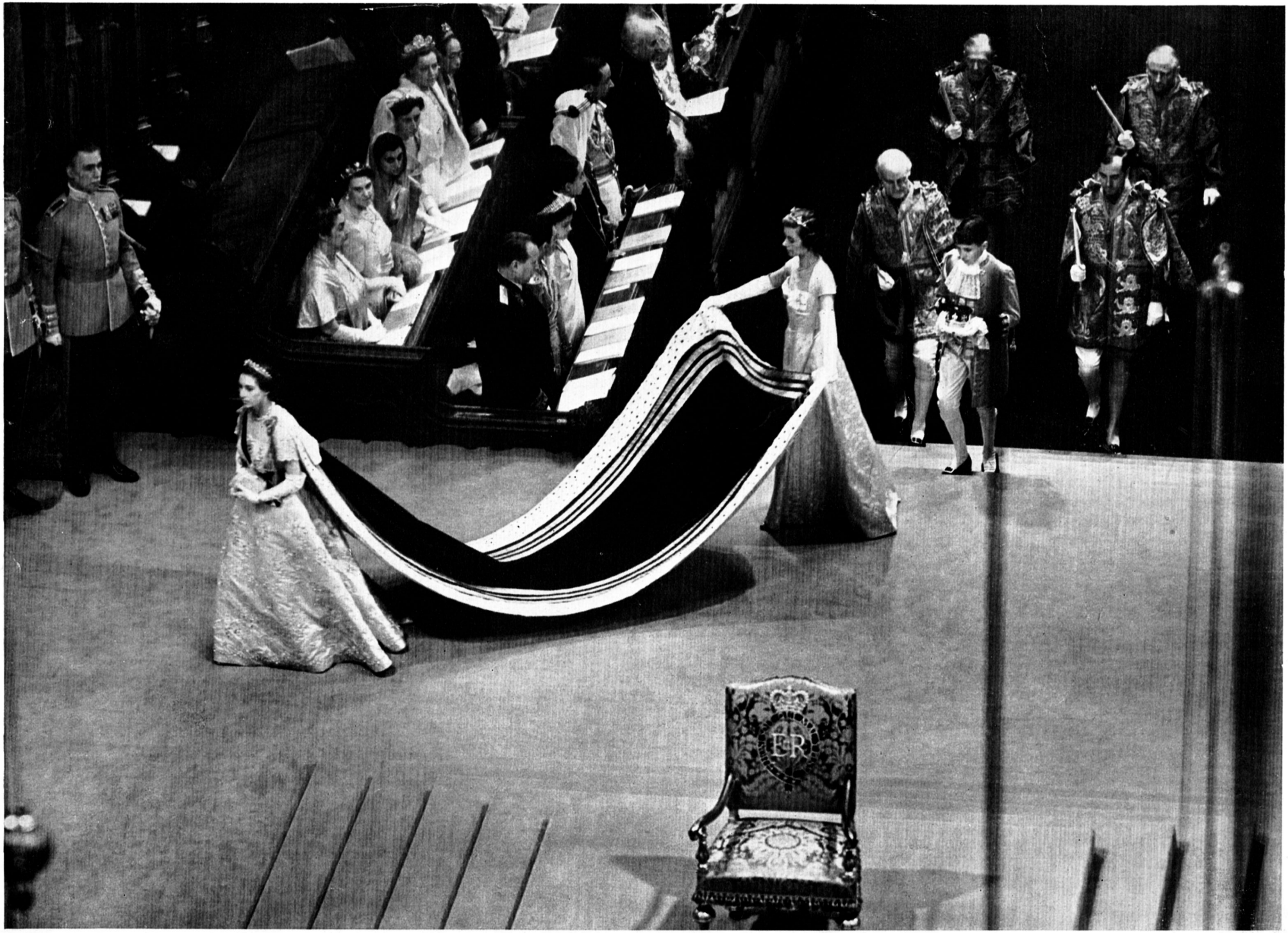
17. ALONG THE VICTORIA EMBANKMENT thousands of London schoolchildren cheer the Queen on her way. It is a day they will remember for the rest of their lives. In the distance are the towers of the Houses of Parliament.



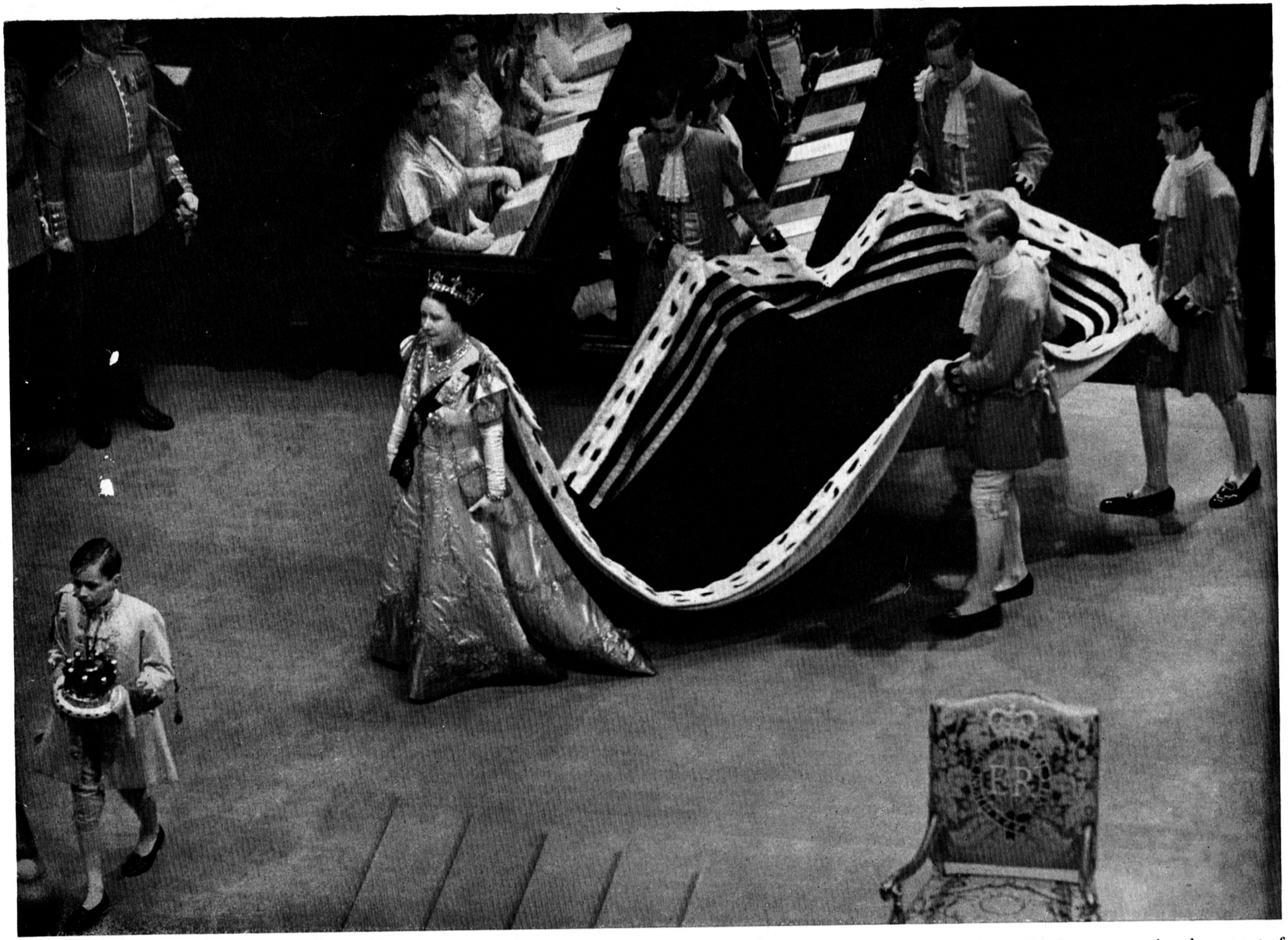
18. THE ARRIVAL AT THE ABBEY. The coach has passed through Parliament Square, its stands filled with Commonwealth visitors, and now moves down the last few yards to the Abbey entrance. The first part of the Queen's journey is nearly over.

19. SALUTE TO A QUEEN. The Queen steps out of her coach at the Abbey. The Maids of Honour arrange her robe. She smiles happily in acknowledgement of the salute of her Master of the Horse.

20. THE ABBEY. Escorted by Heralds, Princess Margaret moves through the nave and towards the choir. Behind her, preceded by the Lord Chamberlain of Her Majesty's household, walks the Queen Mother, her train borne by four pages and followed by the Mistress of the Robes.



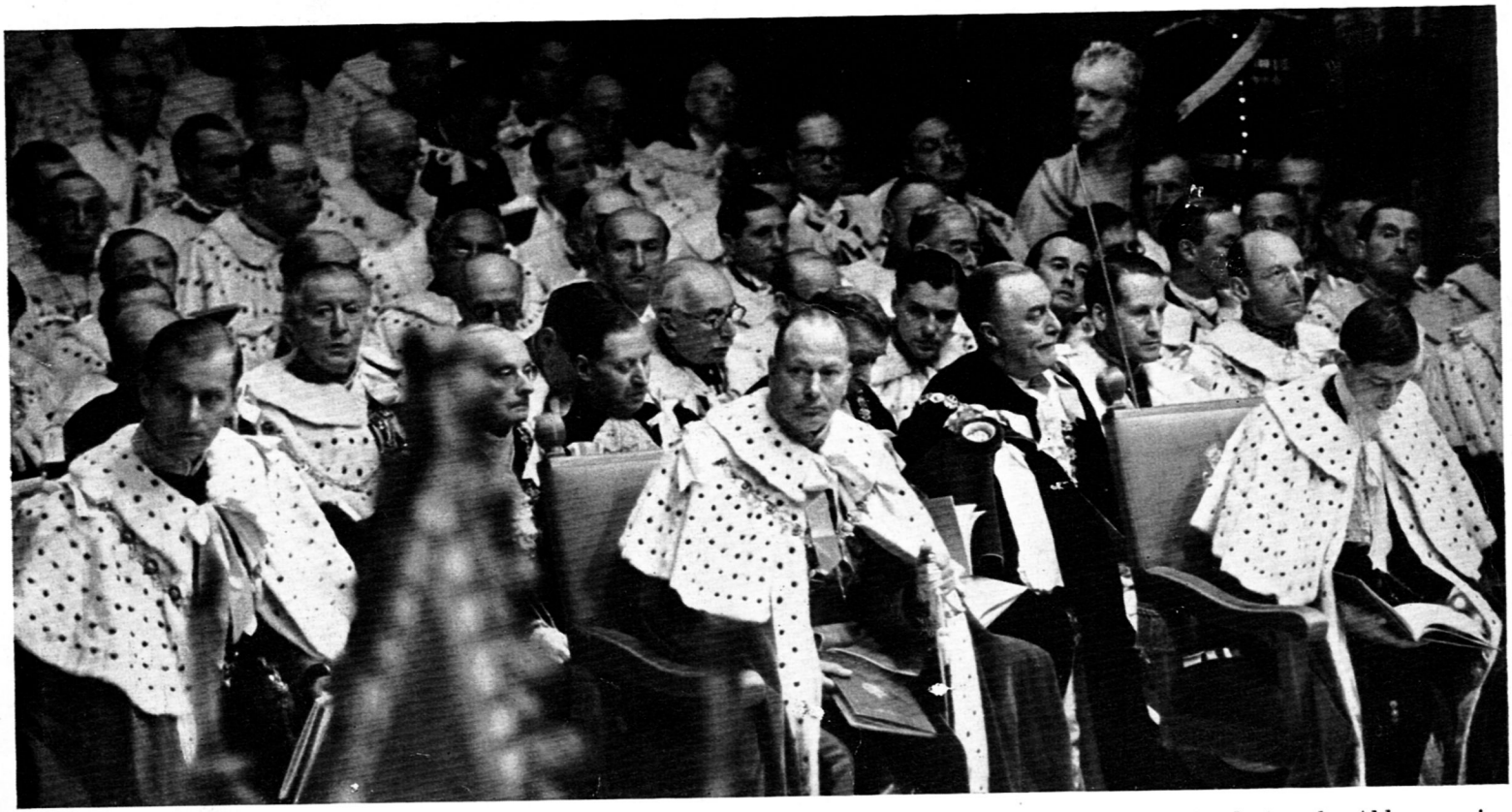
21. THE WAY TO THE ROYAL GALLERY. Princess Margaret passes the empty Throne on its raised platform. Behind her, bearing her coronet, are her page and four Heralds, Richmond, York, Chester and Lancaster, brilliant in scarlet and gold.



22. QUEEN ELIZABETH THE QUEEN MOTHER. She follows her daughter, Princess Margaret, to the Royal Gallery. Before her walks the page carrying the coronet of the Earl of Airlie. Her Majesty's train is borne by Jonathan Peel, Michael Anson, Viscount Carlow and the Earl Erne.

23. THE QUEEN APPROACHES HER CHAIR OF ESTATE. The train of her royal robe of crimson velvet trimmed with ermine is borne by six Maids of Honour. On her right is the Bishop of Durham; on her left the Bishop of Bath and Wells. Immediately behind is the Mistress of the Robes, the Duchess Dowager of Devonshire.

24. THE QUEEN IN HER CHAIR OF ESTATE. The Coronation Service is about to begin. The Queen sits below the Royal Gallery. Immediately to her right stands the Marquess of Salisbury bearing the Sword of State.



25. THE ROYAL DUKES. The Dukes of Edinburgh (*front row, left*), Gloucester (*centre*) and Kent (*right*) during the Abbey service. Behind them sit the peers of the realm, splendid in their ermine and velvet robes.

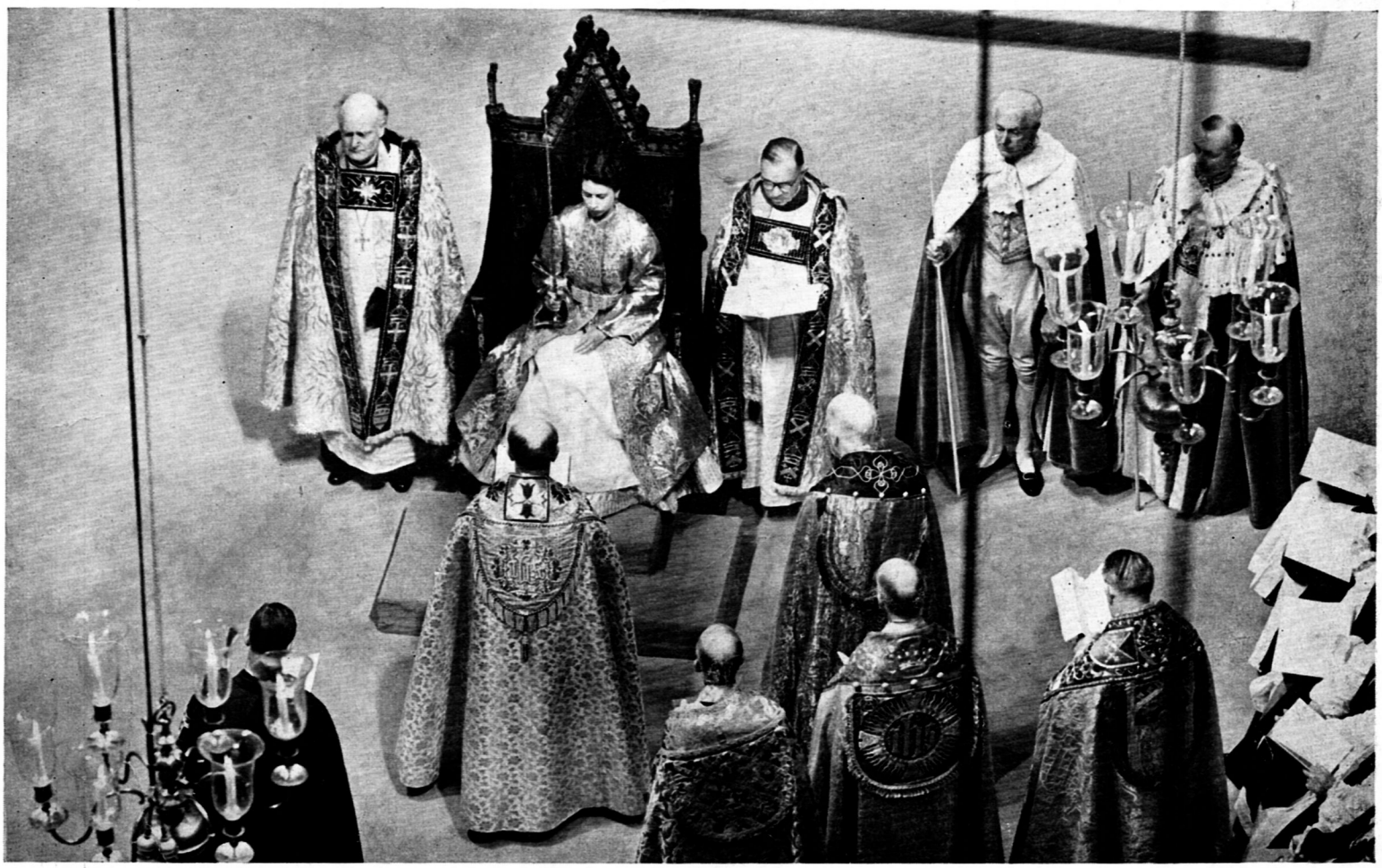
26. THE RECOGNITION. In this part of the ceremony, the Queen stands by St Edward's Chair showing herself to her people at each side of the theatre, the Archbishop of Canterbury saying: 'Sirs, I here present unto you Queen Elizabeth, your undoubted Queen.'

27. IN THE ROYAL GALLERY. In the front row, from left to right: the Duchess of Kent, the Princess Royal, the Queen Mother, Princess Margaret, Prince William of Gloucester, the Duchess of Gloucester, and Prince Richard of Gloucester. Behind Prince Richard are the Earl and Countess of Harewood.

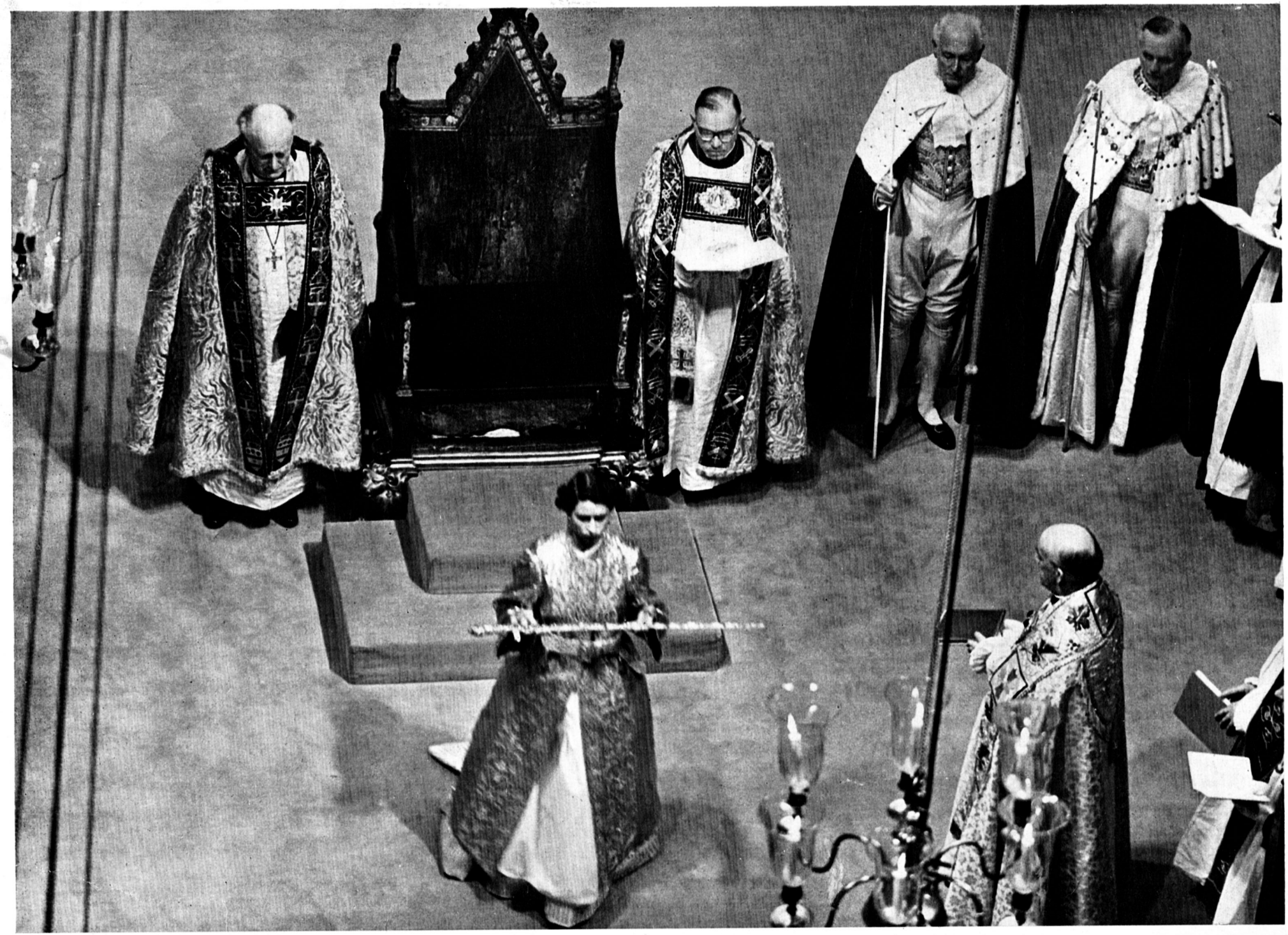
28. THE CORONATION OATH. After the Recognition, the Queen prepares to take the Coronation oath administered by the Archbishop of Canterbury. She promises to govern her peoples according to their laws, to execute all judgements in mercy, and to maintain the laws of God and the establishment of the Church of England.

29. THE ANOINTING. The Queen, now divested of her royal robe, sits in King Edward's Chair to await the anointing with holy oil. Four Knights of the Garter hold a splendid canopy above her head.

30. THE PRESENTING OF THE SPURS. The Queen, now clothed in the supertunica of cloth of gold, receives at the hands of the Lord Great Chamberlain the Spurs of solid gold, which she touches and sends back to the Altar.

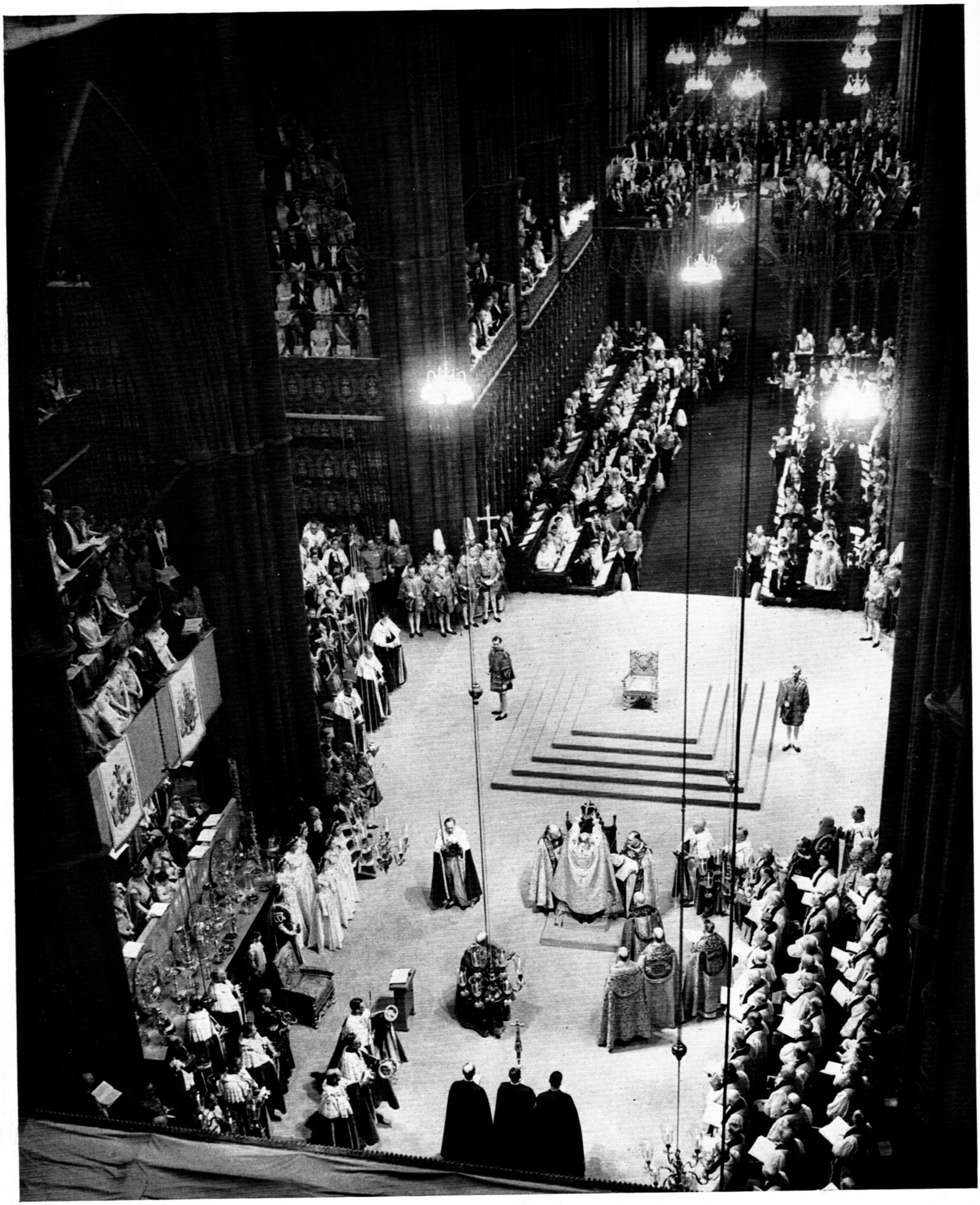


31. THE PRESENTING OF THE SWORD. The Sword has been brought down from the Altar. As the Queen holds it in her right hand, the Archbishop says: 'With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity . . .'

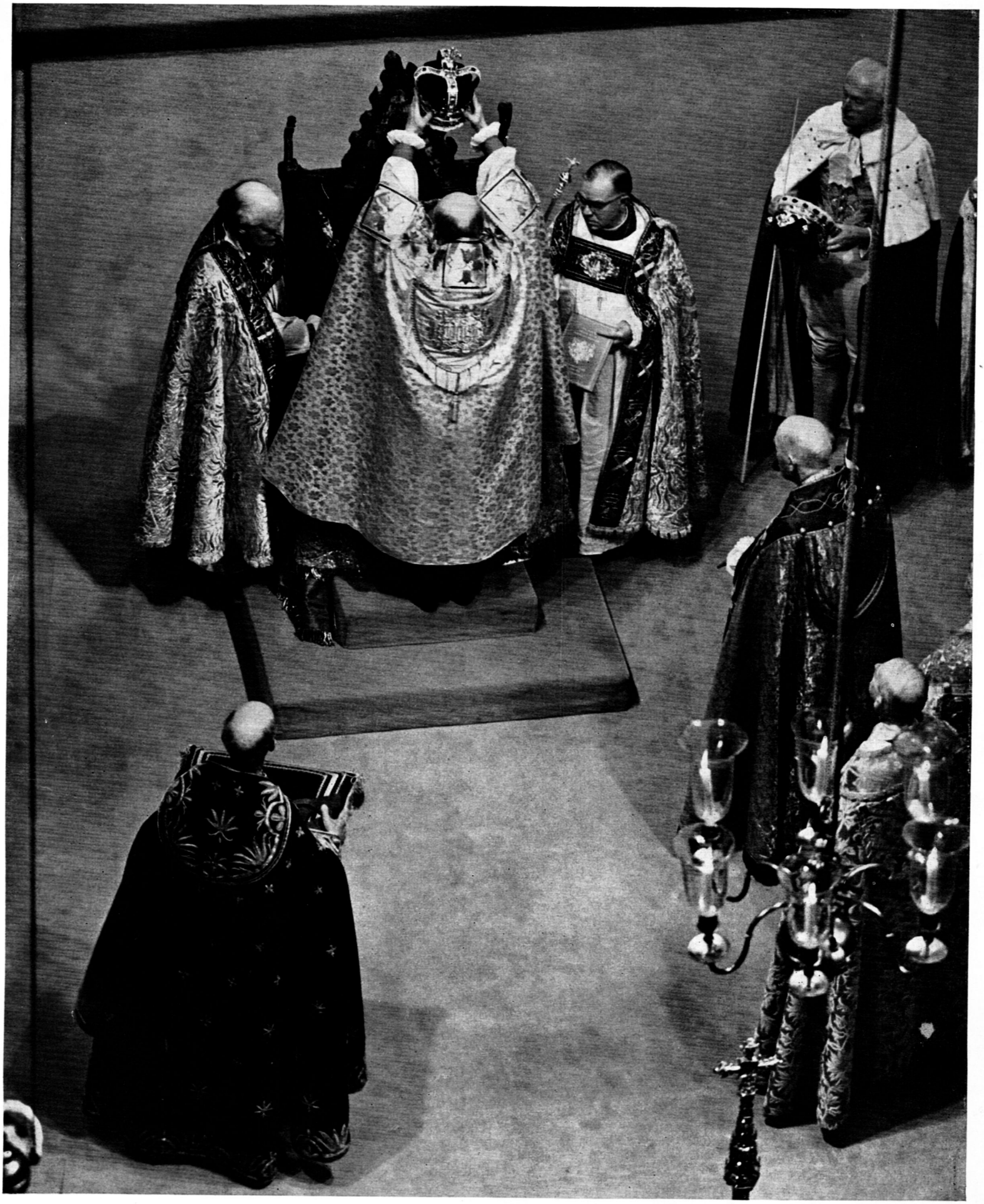


32. THE QUEEN RETURNS THE SWORD TO THE ALTAR. The Sword is sheathed. The Queen steps down from the Coronation Chair, and offers it up to the Altar. From there it will be redeemed for a hundred shillings by the Marquess of Salisbury, who will carry it naked before the Queen for the rest of the ceremony.

33. THE DELIVERY OF THE ORB. As the Archbishop places the Orb in the Queen's right hand, he says: 'Receive this Orb set under the Cross, and remember that the whole world is subject to the power and empire of Christ our Redeemer.'



34. THE SUPREME MOMENT OF CORONATION. The magnificent scene within the Abbey as the Archbishop lifts St Edward's Crown high over the Queen before he puts it 'reverently upon her head'.



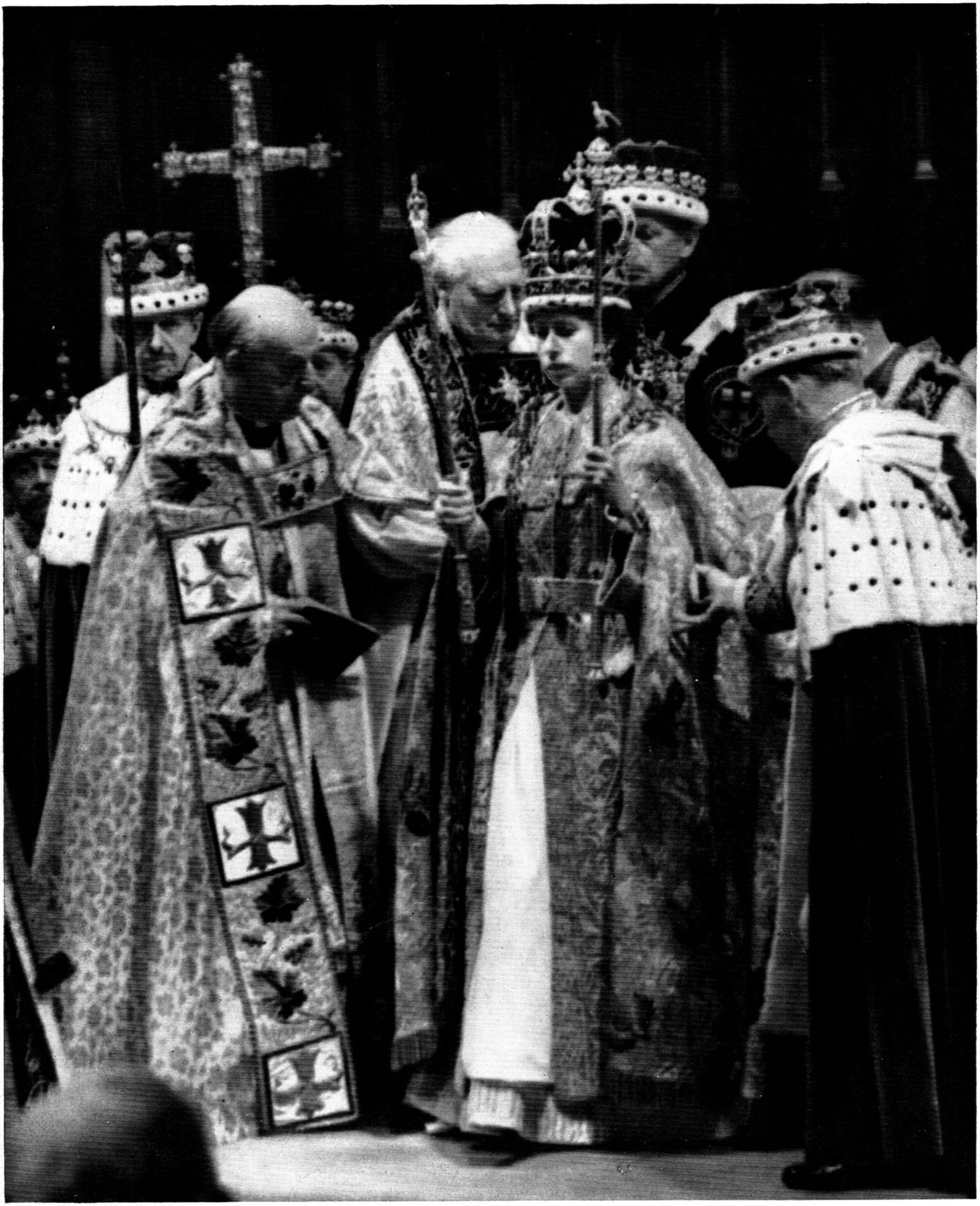
35. THE CROWNING OF A QUEEN. A closer view of the crowning. The Archbishop holds the Crown. On his left and right are the Bishops of Durham, and Bath and Wells. Below the Throne are the Archbishop of York (*right*) and the Dean of Westminster (*left*).

36. THE PUTTING ON OF THE CROWN. Another view of this great moment in the Coronation Service. Beyond the Queen stand the Heralds, and the peers who will put on their coronets when the Queen has been crowned.

37. THE QUEEN IS CROWNED. She wears the Robe Royal and the Stole Royal. In her right hand is the Sceptre with the Cross; in her left, the Rod with the Dove of Mercy. On her head is St Edward's Crown.

38. THE QUEEN UPON HER THRONE. After her crowning, the Queen is 'lifted into her Throne by the Archbishops and bishops, and other peers'. Around her stand the great officers of State, those who bear the Swords of Mercy, of Spiritual Justice and of Temporal

Justice, and the bearers of the regalia. In the right background of the main group is the Earl Marshal, the Duke of Norfolk, who has been responsible for the conduct of the ceremonial within the Abbey. The moment has come for the princes and peers to do their homage.

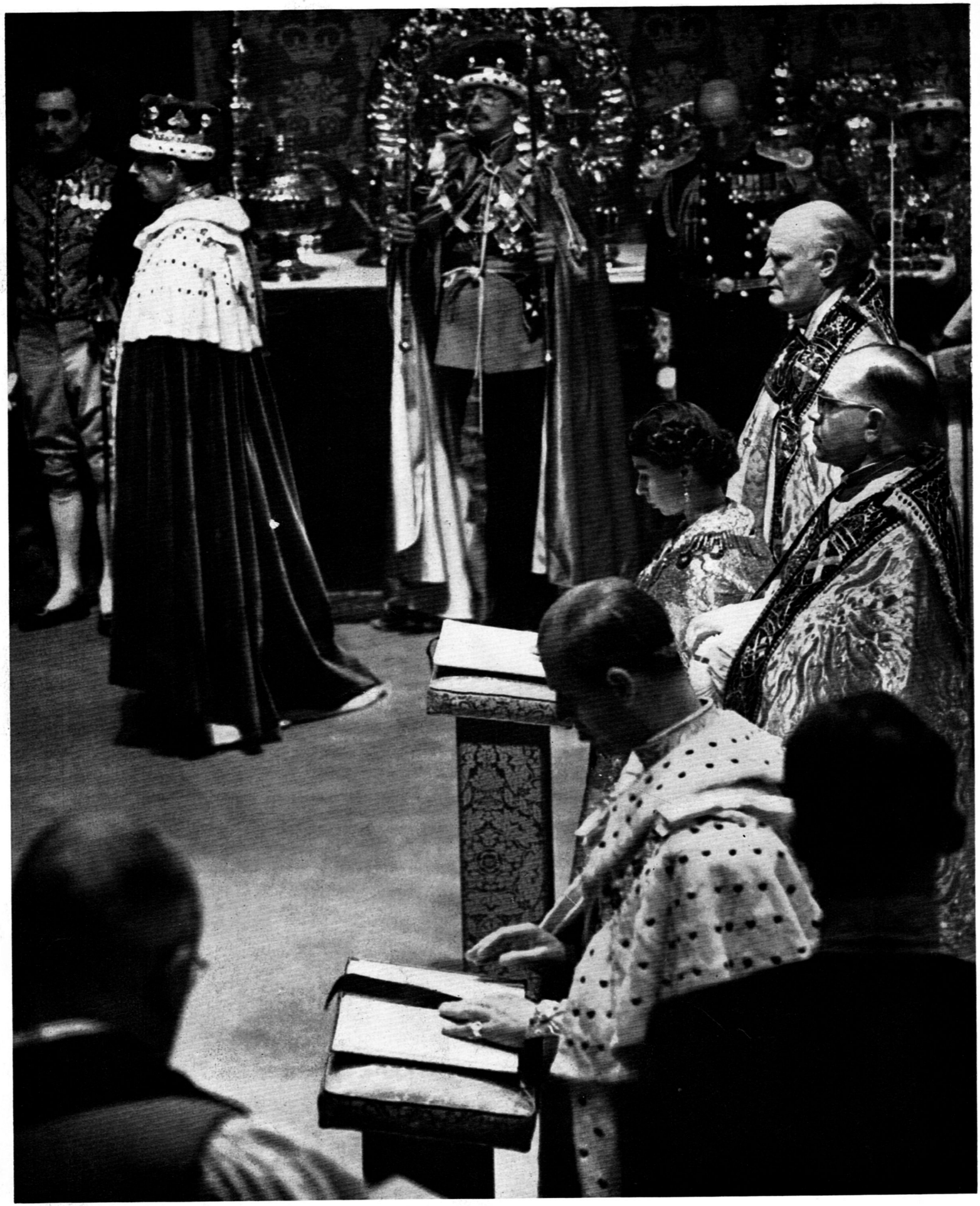


39. THE QUEEN IS ENTHRONED. This is the moment immediately preceding that shown on the previous pages. The new-crowned Queen is conducted from St Edward's Chair to her Throne.

40. PRINCE CHARLES IN THE ABBEY. The young prince turns to the Queen Mother to ask a question about what he sees below him. His mother, the Queen, has been crowned.

41. THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH DOES HOMAGE. He kneels before his wife, the Queen, places his hands between hers, and vows in the ancient words to become 'your liege man of life and limb, and of earthly worship; and faith and truth I will bear unto you, to live and die, against all manner of folks. So help me God.'

42. HOMAGE OF THE DUKE OF GLOUCESTER. When he has spoken the words of homage, he will rise and touch the Crown on the Queen's head and kiss her left cheek. Afterwards follows the homage of the Duke of Kent, and of the peers. Then 'the drums shall beat, and the trumpets sound, and all the people shout "God save Queen Elizabeth".'



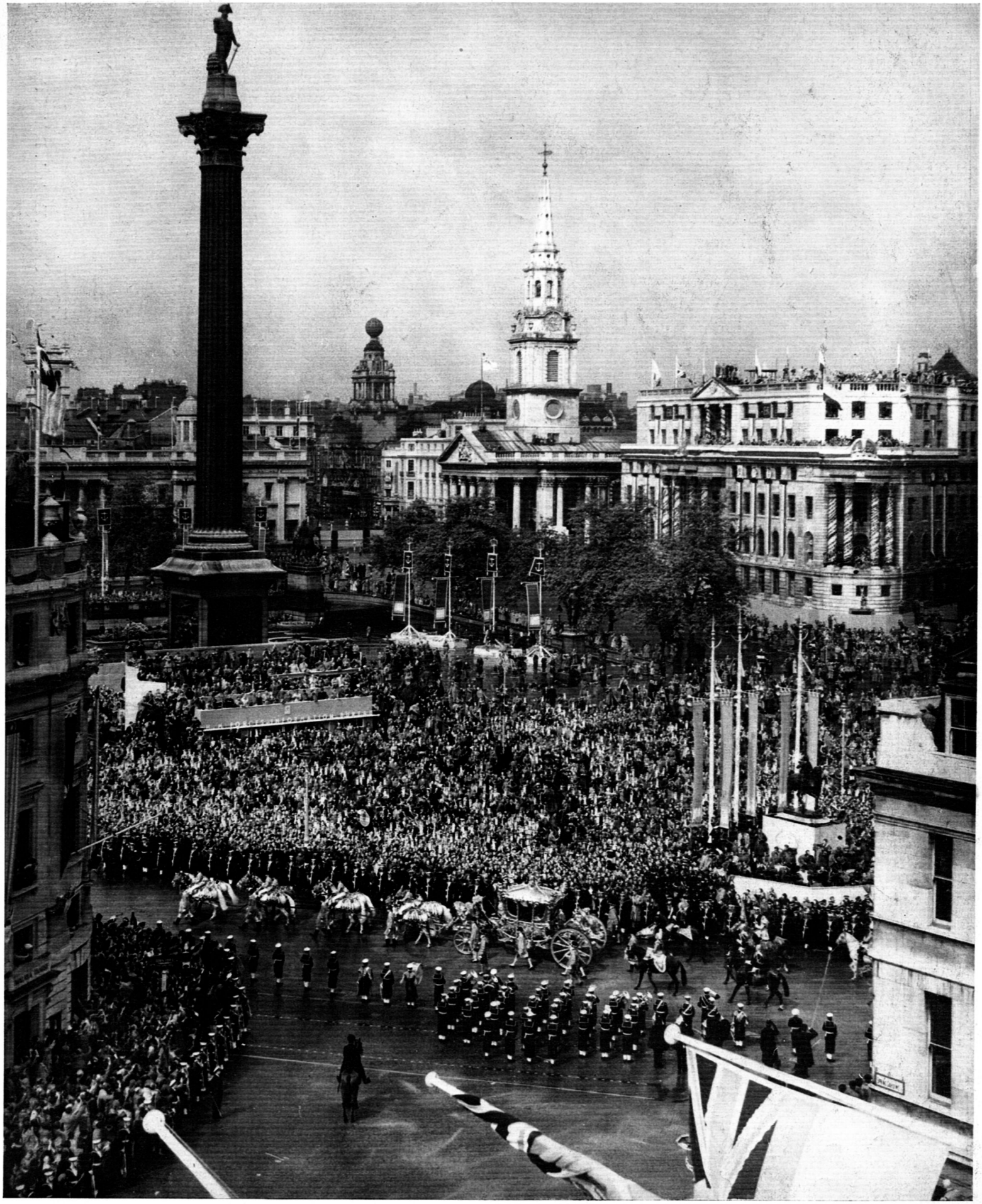
43. BEFORE THE ALTAR. As the Coronation Service draws to its end, the Duke of Edinburgh kneels with the Queen before the Altar. Together they make their Communion.

44. THE PROCESSION FROM THE ABBEY. The Queen, crowned and bearing the Orb and Sceptre, passes slowly down the nave to the west door of the Abbey, soon to receive the acclamation of the great crowds along the Coronation route.

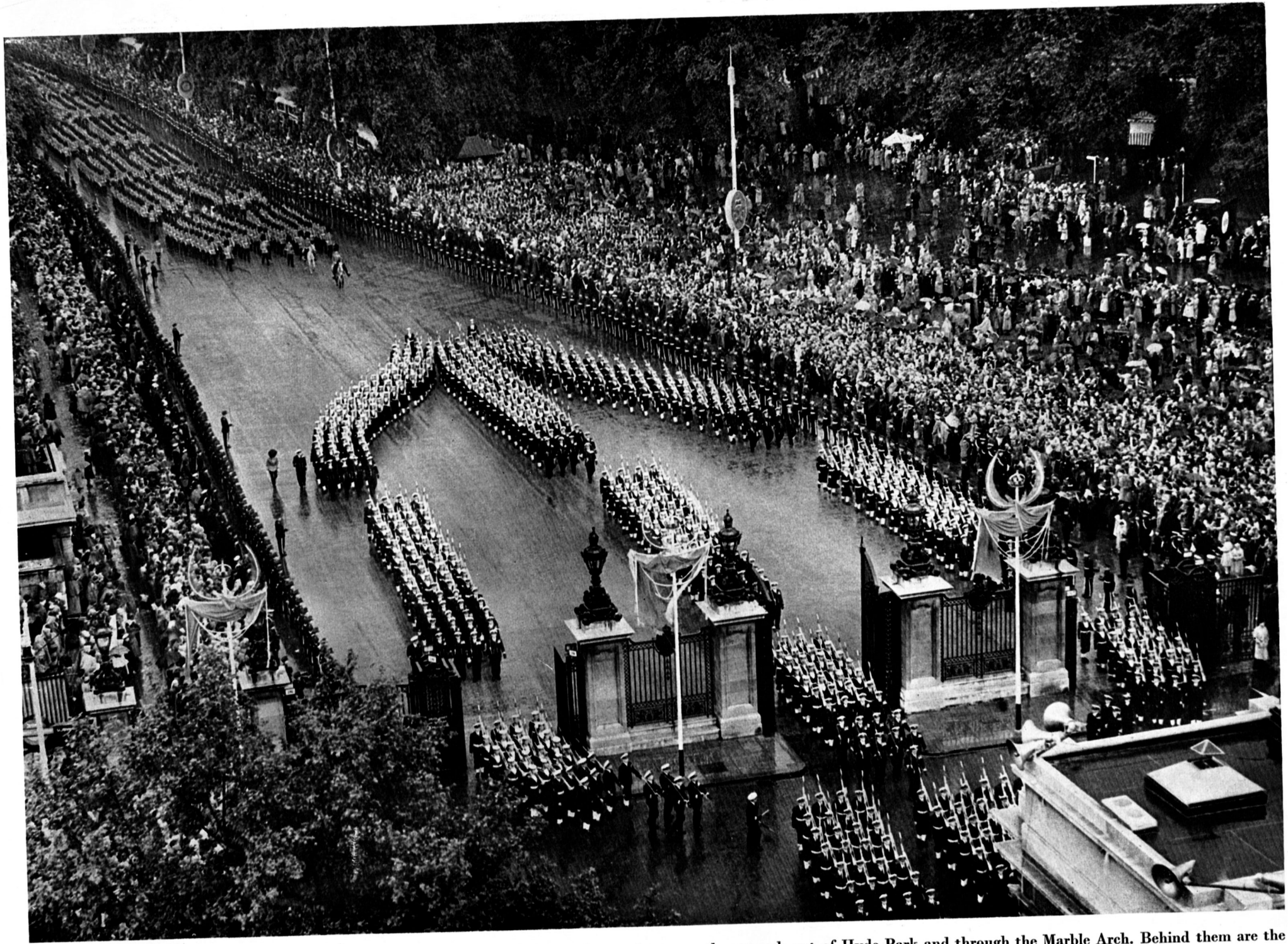
45. LEAVING THE ABBEY. The lovely and magnificent Queen is about to step into the State Coach. She now wears the Imperial Crown, glittering with silver, pearls, emeralds, sapphires and diamonds, and the great ruby that once belonged to the Black Prince.

46. THE ROYAL DRIVE BEGINS. The scene at the annexe to the Abbey as the golden coach moves off to join the procession along the Coronation route.

47. IN WHITEHALL. The famous street is now almost left behind. Beyond the escort are the gay silver and red helmeted standards that decorate the route, and in the background the Clock Tower of the Houses of Parliament.

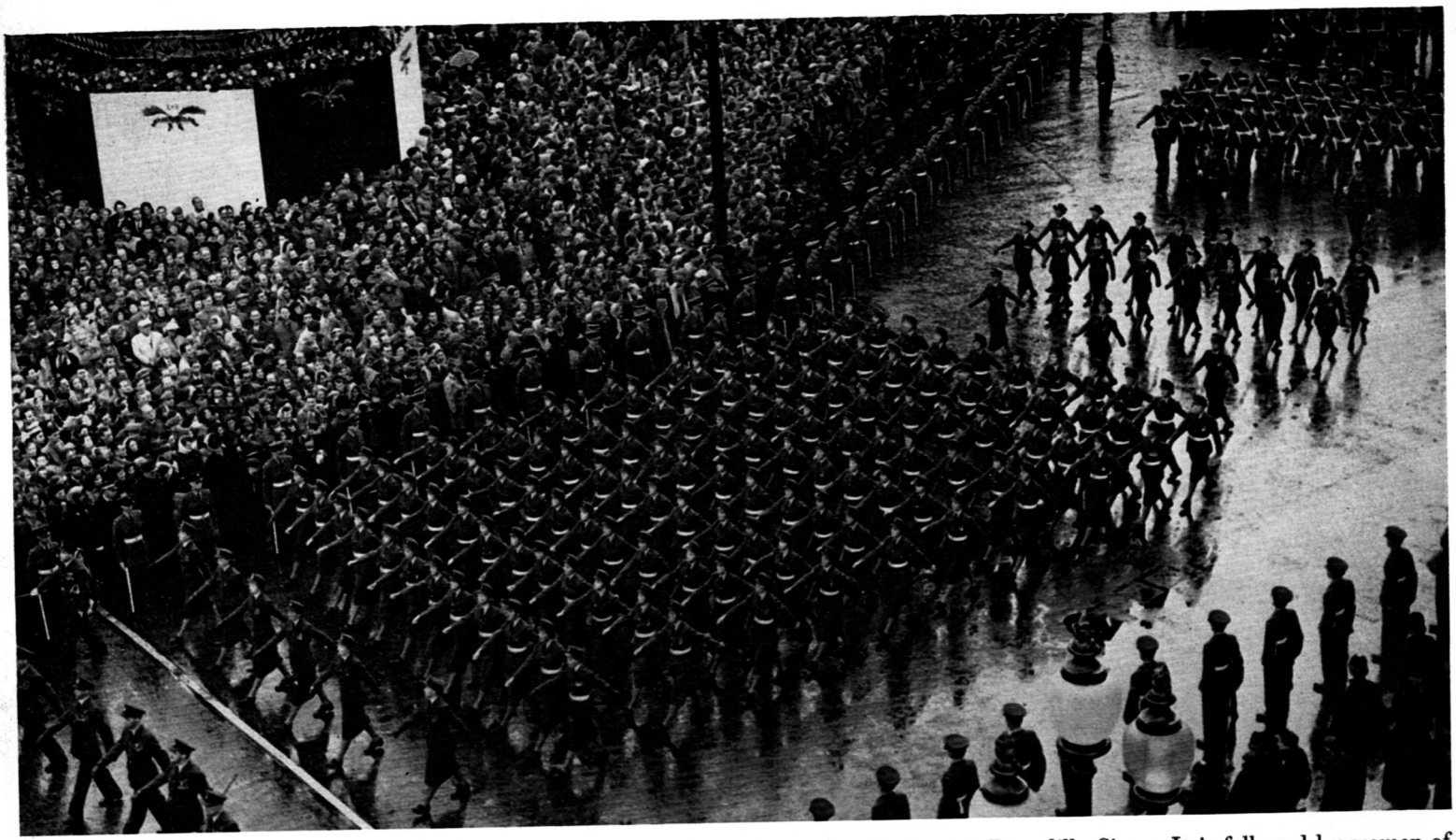


48. THROUGH TRAFALGAR SQUARE. Nelson's Column and the spire of St Martin-in-the-Fields look down on the procession as it passes through crowds that have waited many hours in the heavy rain.

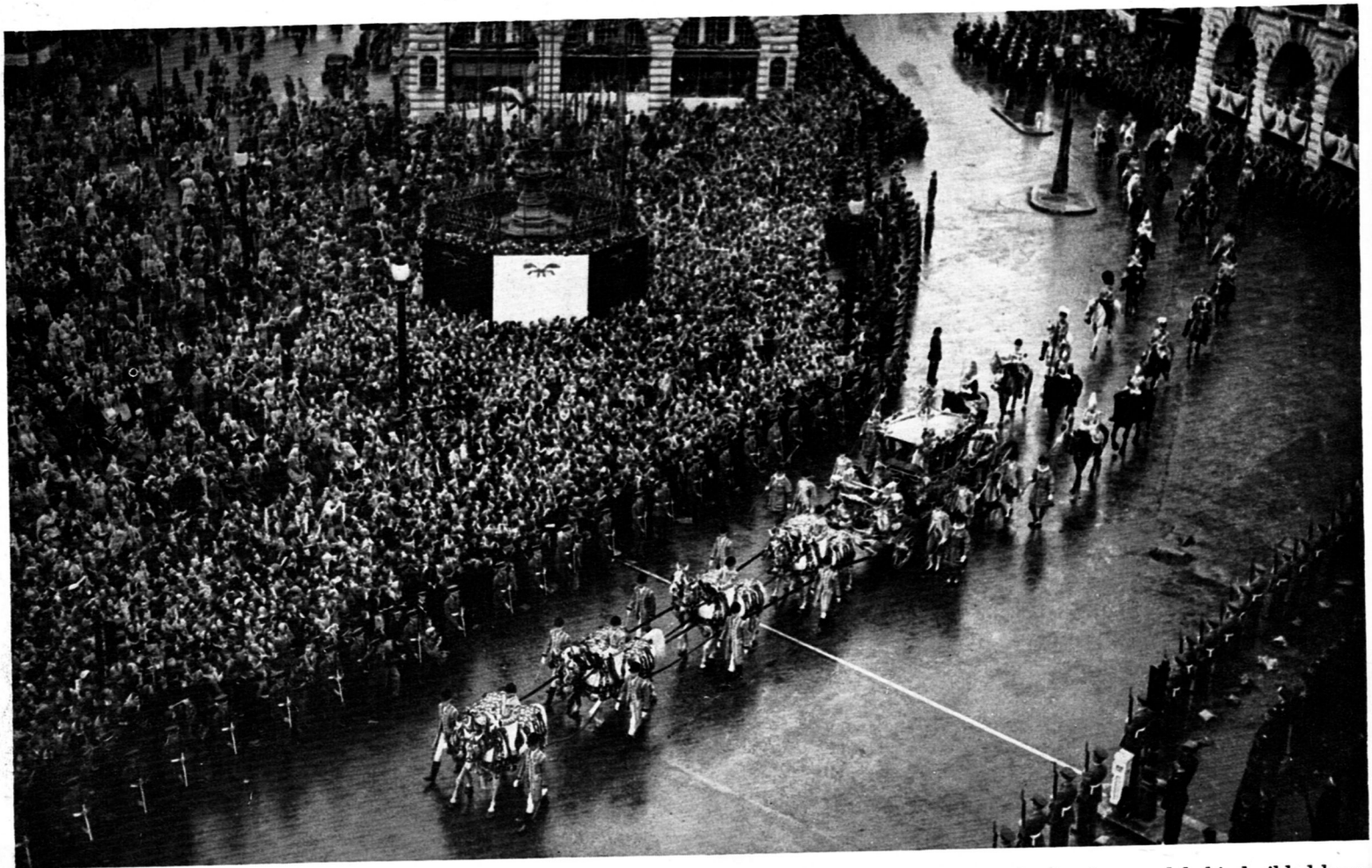


49. AT THE MARBLE ARCH. The men of the Royal Navy break into three columns as they march out of Hyde Park and through the Marble Arch. Behind them are the impressive detachments of the Brigade of Guards.

50. THE STATE COACH AT HYDE PARK CORNER. The rain beats heavily upon the coach, on the brilliant uniforms of its escort, and on the cheering crowds as it approaches Hyde Park. It quenches neither the enthusiasm of the crowds, nor the splendour of the procession.



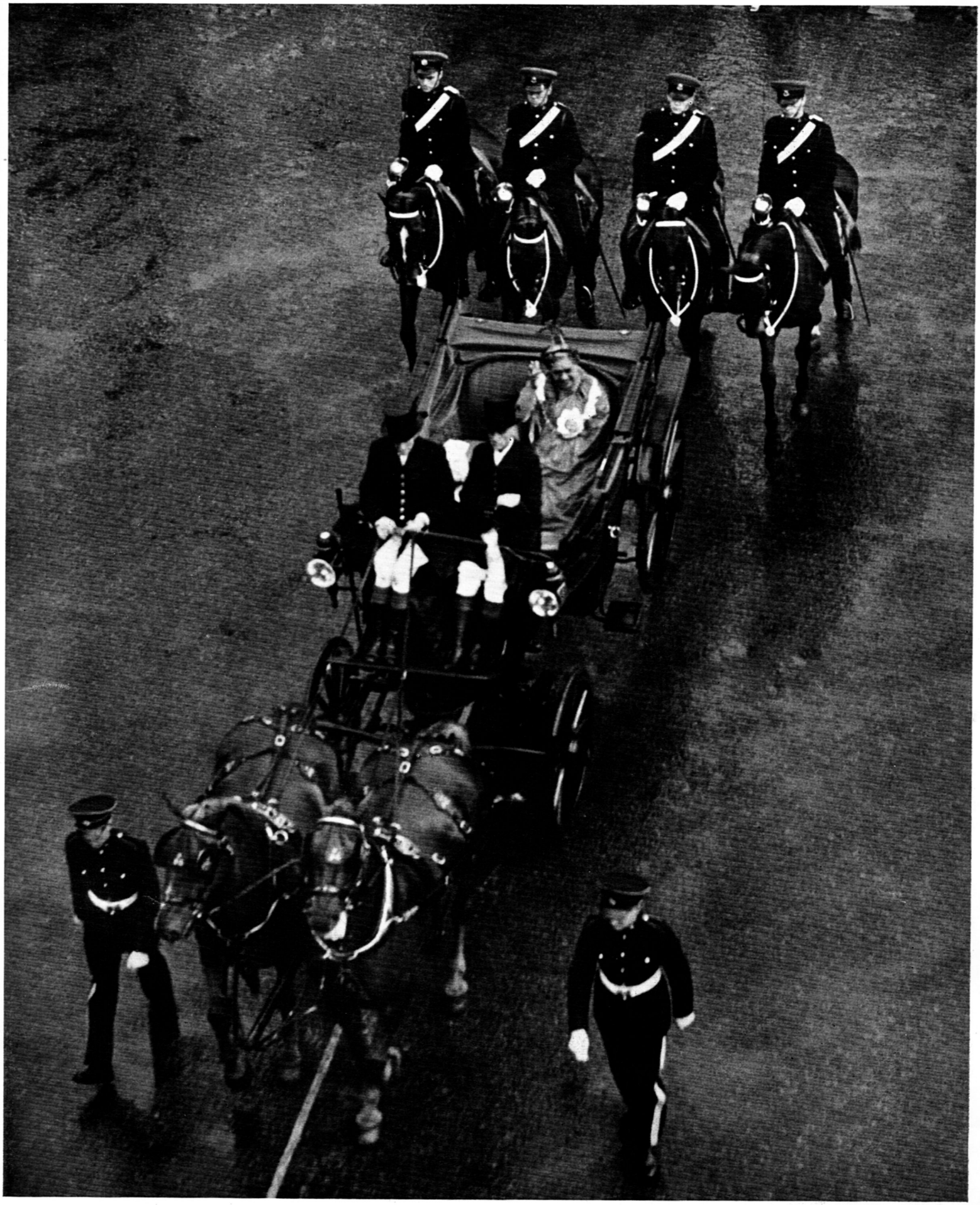
51. THE WOMEN'S ROYAL AIR FORCE DETACHMENT marches smartly through Piccadilly Circus. It is followed by women of the R.A.F. Nursing Service, and men of the R.A.F. Police and the R.A.F. Regiment.



52. THROUGH PICCADILLY CIRCUS. The crowds are thick around the statue of Eros, resplendently caged behind gilded bars. Here the route is lined by men of the Royal Air Force.

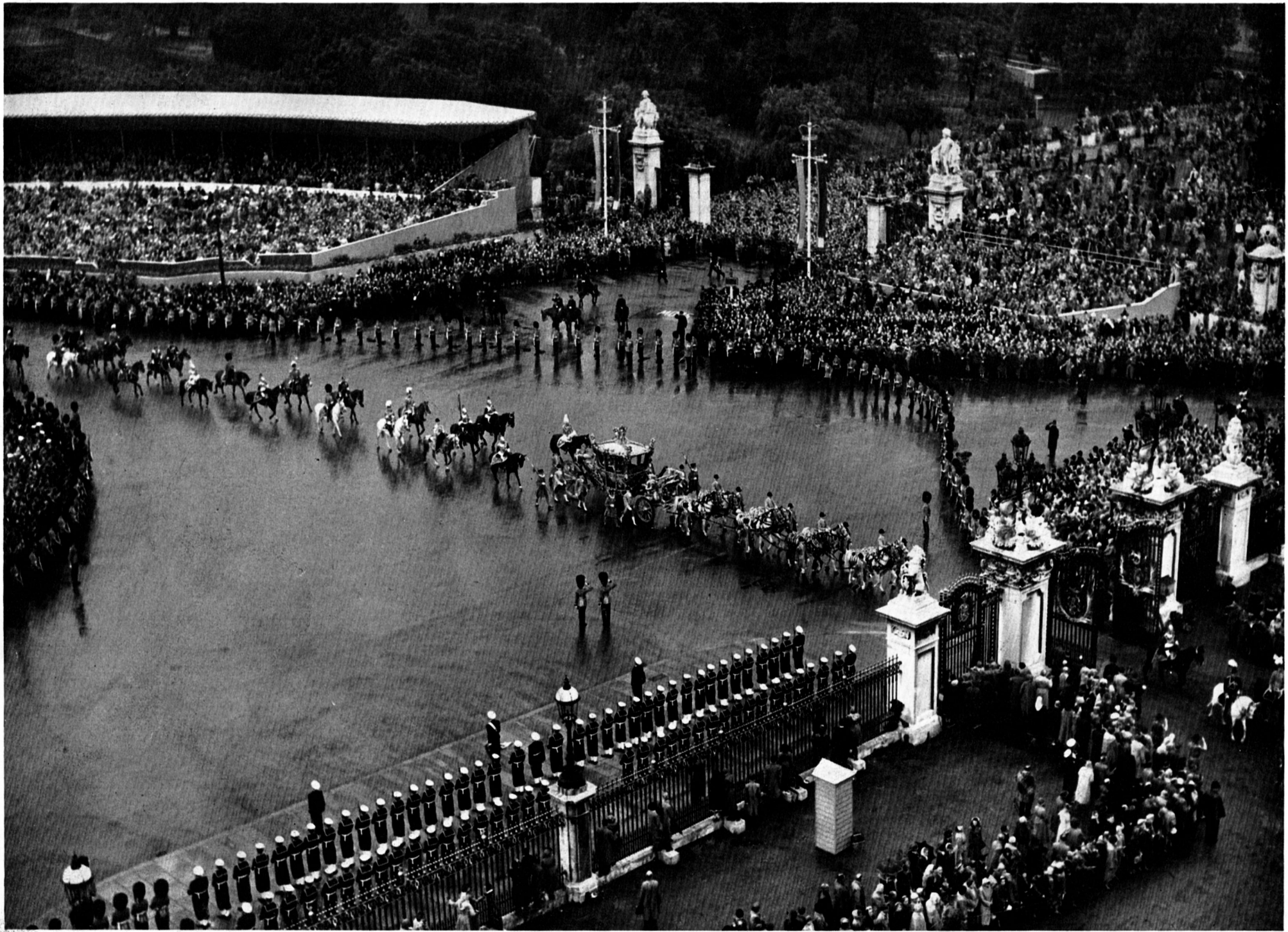
53. MARCHING THROUGH OXFORD STREET. The Canadian contingent passes by. At its head is a detachment of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in scarlet tunics and riding their famous black horses.

54. THE SMILING QUEEN drives by in her glittering coach. This is the moment that is the reward of the hundreds of thousands who have lined the route on this grey, cold day of an English summer.



55. QUEEN SALOTE OF TONGA drives by in an open carriage. None who saw the procession will forget this royal figure in the group of colonial rulers, undaunted by drenching rain.

56. THE GREAT PROCESSION. From a vantage-point high above Trafalgar Square the marching troops and bands of the United Kingdom and the Dominions can be seen sweeping down Cockspur Street, through the Square and Admiralty Arch, into the Mall, and up to Buckingham Palace in the distance.



57. THE LAST STAGE OF THE JOURNEY. The procession is almost over. The golden coach is about to enter the forecourt of Buckingham Palace. Behind it the crowds already begin to press towards the Palace gates.

58. ON THE BALCONY. A supremely happy picture of the Queen Mother talking to her grandchildren, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, while the Duke of Edinburgh looks on.

59. AT THE PALACE GATES. The crowds surge up to the gates, and on to the balcony steps the Queen with her Maids of Honour, and members of the Royal family. It is the climax of the Coronation procession.

60. THE QUEEN GREETS HER PEOPLE. Radiant, she waves from the Palace balcony in answer to the cheers of the crowds. From her shoulders hangs the Garter collar; on her wrist is one of the golden Armills placed there during the Coronation Service.

61. WATCHING THE CORONATION FLY-PAST. The royal party looks up as the first of the Royal Air Force aircraft flies in. Formations of 168 jet fighters of Fighter Command and the Royal Canadian Air Force took part in this impressive salute to the Queen.

62. THE ROYAL FAMILY IN BUCKINGHAM PALACE. In the Throne Room the Queen stands with her family, and other members of the Royal family. In front are her two children, and, in kilts, the two sons of the Duke of Gloucester and the younger son of the Duchess of Kent. Also in the group are members of European royal houses.

63. THE QUEEN AND THE DUKE OF EDINBURGH IN THE THRONE ROOM AT BUCKINGHAM PALACE

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